

Montana, as the "James F. Battin United States Courthouse". Congress passed H.R. 158 earlier this year, and it was signed into law by the President on April 5th, 1999, as Public Law 106-11. I believe that the renaming of this courthouse, which Judge Battin presided over for so long, is the most fitting tribute that the United States Congress and the people of Montana can pay to this great man, whose outstanding career in public service spanned over 40 years. Come next Monday, when this building is officially rechristened with its new name, I think all of us should take a moment to tip our hats in thanks to Judge Battin for a job well-done. Mr. President, I yield the floor.●

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT TOBIAS

● Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Robert Tobias, a man who has shown untiring commitment to the concerns of Federal employees. Recently I had the opportunity to attend one of the receptions in his honor hosted by the many Federal employees he has represented and led so effectively.

Mr. Tobias, who is retiring after four terms as president of the National Treasury Employees Union, NTEU, has proven his dedication to the fair treatment, professional development and quality of life for Federal workers time and time again. During his 31 years of service, the organization has grown to the point that it now represents over 155,000 men and women who serve our Federal Government. For the past 16 years, Mr. Tobias led the NTEU, spearheading initiatives to ensure fair workplace policies for Federal workers and pursuing effective labor-management policies for more efficient service from Federal agencies. But perhaps most importantly, he's championed family friendly policies to help our outstanding Federal workers continue to meet demands and increase productivity. These innovations include implementing alternative work schedules and negotiating child care facilities for busy Federal families.

Because of his outstanding reputation, he's won many awards and appointments, most notably his appointment to the National Partnership Council and the Commission to Restructure the IRS among them. Under his leadership, he's ensured that Federal employees are included in the many decisions to help Federal agencies run more efficiently and that they are publicly recognized for all the hard work they perform.

Robert Tobias leaves an indelible mark on the Federal workplace by the hard work he has done on behalf of NTEU—indeed, the nation—and we are indebted to him for his service. I wish him continued success as he moves on to teaching and writing, knowing we can still rely on his voice and experience when it comes to the critical needs of Federal employees.●

RECOGNITION OF THE FEDERAL WAY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S INTERNET ACADEMY

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, when I began my Innovation in Education Award Program earlier this year, I endeavored to find and recognize programs, schools, and individuals whose work in improving education deserves recognition. The Federal Way School District's Internet Academy is just such a program and one which I am proud to present with my Innovation in Education Award.

The Internet Academy is the brain child of recently departed Superintendent Tom Vander Ark, who is widely credited with injecting new life into the Federal Way District. The Academy has a standards-based curriculum that provides a comprehensive course of study designed to meet state guidelines and instructional objectives. What is innovative, however, is the way in which the Academy engages students under the continuous guidance of state accredited teachers. The Academy offers a full range of courses for school credit, via the Internet, for grades K-12. The program was created only 3 years ago as a pilot K-8 program and has expanded significantly since then. In June of 1998 it had 65 enrollees—by June of 1999 it had expanded to over 800.

As our society's use of technology has increased, it is important that our public education system keep abreast of such transformation and provide opportunities using technology to encourage student learning. By offering an interactive curriculum that is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the district's Academy is ensuring that students are given maximum opportunity to access a good education.

Today's best instructional technologies can enhance the learning environment by eliminating the time and space boundaries present with the traditional classroom. This alternative learning environment also allows for an increasingly active role for families in the education of our children. It is a common-sense proposition that increased parental involvement promotes a richer educational process. This aspect of learning is especially critical for home-schoolers in search of instruction for specific topics or seeking to tap into the resources of the public education system.

The parent of one home-schooled child noted: "Home-school can be really challenging sometimes. It is great to have a resource like the Internet Academy for my son."

Meanwhile, a 10th grade student said: "I like the Internet Academy because I can work at my own pace. The on-line curriculum gives me a better understanding than what I can get in a classroom with 30 other students. The approach allows me to explore areas that interest me while completing the course work."

I have heard from many educators that they sometimes struggle to main-

tain the interest and energy of their students. The Federal Way School District, through its Internet Academy, has shown that creative means to keep students engaged in today's multimedia environment are not only possible but, can be highly successful.

Our economy, powered in large part by a strong hi-tech sector, has achieved an impressive record of growth in recent months and it stands to reason that creatively injecting hi-tech tools into our education system can have equally rewarding results. I applaud the Federal Way School District's vision in establishing the Internet Academy, I endorse their efforts to ensure that students are given every possible opportunity to access and learn from our public education system. I hope my colleagues will join in my recognizing the Internet Academy's innovative work.●

TRIBUTE TO PAT THOMAS

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding Vermonter, Patricia Thomas, formerly the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties. Pat's commitment to improving the health status of Vermonters serves as a model to us all. She is, and will remain, a stunning example of how one person can positively affect so many.

Pat has served Vermont in a variety of capacities. As a teacher and college administrator, as a government official and director of Vermont's largest United Way, and on various boards and commissions, Pat always strived to improve the quality of life here in Vermont. Most recently, she served the people of Vermont at the helm of our State's largest VNA. It is this role that I wish to elaborate upon today before the U.S. Senate.

Throughout Pat's 7-year tenure at the VNA, her leadership was instrumental in sustaining Vermont's unique, nonprofit home health care system, while maintaining its high-quality, cost-effective service. Ironically, when this nationally renowned system was severely challenged by an unintended consequence of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, Pat's advocacy easily convinced me and other lawmakers that corrective action was essential. With such an impressive track record and with so many Vermonters relying on her agency's care, it was an easy argument to both make and adopt. Certainly, being a key member of my Health Care Advisory Board, there have been numerous occasions when I have relied on Pat's wise counsel, but none was more critical than during the last year's debate. Vermonters were fortunate to have such an advocate and leader in Pat Thomas.

In addition to being an effective advocate on the Federal level, Pat led her VNA through a dynamic and critical